

3.5.2 Albion Fire Protection District

The Albion FPD covers a total of 34,857 acres including 4,281 acres of BLM land and 30,531 acres of private land (Table 6). Most of the private land is used for grazing and haying while the BLM lands provide alternate grazing sites. In the past, fire was frequent and may be again when favorable conditions occur. Stands of Pinyon pine and juniper (Figure 7) occur in isolated patches throughout the Albion FPD. Canopy cover ranges from 10% in open stands to 30% in dense stands with fuel loading and potential fire behavior increasing proportionally. The wildfire return interval has been shortened considerably due to early flammability and rapid rate of spread of cheatgrass and the steady encroachment of juniper (Figure 8). Because the area has experienced extreme drought over the past several years, this FPD has had several fires. During 1975-2001 the FPD responded to 13 wildfires on public land, with more than 22,000 acres burned.

R&S Enterprise (2003) prepared a Mitigation Assessment for the city of Albion and the Albion FPD in 2003. This assessment included a hazardous fuels reduction program, estimated costs, and project treatment maps identifying the need to install buffer strips for 22 landowners (476.5 acres), sites adjacent to BLM lands (160 acres), Sawtooth National Forest (264 acres), State highway 77 right-of-way (20 acres) and Albion Highway District right-of-way (20 acres). In addition, the Mitigation Assessment identified the Albion Fire Department infrastructure including: personnel, training, equipment, and facility. Section 4.0 of this document provides the specific mitigations and associated costs for Albion FPD.

A new fire station is presently under construction and will provide housing for fire equipment and meeting space.



Figure 7. Pinyon-juniper fuels along Goose Road and Trapper Creek road.



Figure 8. Heavy fuels south of Albion and adjacent to Highway 77.

Fire, Structural, and Community Assessments for Albion FPD

The following is a summary of the Fire Hazard Assessment for Albion FPD. Table 10. shows the complete results. Overall, the two legal subdivisions in this FPD received a Class A (low) fire hazard assessment rating for one out of 12 elements (8.3%) and a Class B (medium) fire hazard assessment rating for 11 out of 12 elements (92%).

Vegetation Type – Sagebrush-grassland will be the primary carrier of any ignition to the wildland-urban interface.

Slope – Most slopes within the assessment area are 10-30%.

Aspect – The majority of the structures within the assessment area face east.

Elevation – The elevation within the assessment area averages is between 3500-5500 feet.

Fuel Type – Fuel types within the assessment area is medium fuel (brush, medium shrubs, and small trees).

Fuel Density – Fuel density within the assessment area is broken moderate fuels adjacent to federal land 31 to 60% cover.

Fuel Bed Depth – Fuel bed depth with the assessment area is moderate (1-3 feet).

Table 10. Fire Hazard Assessment for Albion FPD

Subdivision/Parcels	Vegetation Type	Rating Elements					
		Slope	Aspect	Elevation	Fuel Type	Fuel Density	Fuel Bed Depth
Marsh Creek Ridge	Sagebrush/grass	B	B	B	B	B	B
Land Creek Heights	Sagebrush/grass	B	A	B	B	B	B

A=Class A low fire hazard assessment rating

B=Class B medium fire hazard assessment rating

C=Class C high fire hazard assessment rating

The following is a summary of the Structural Hazard Assessment for Albion FPD. Table 11 shows the complete results. Overall, the subdivisions received a Class A (low) fire hazard assessment rating for 2 out of 14 elements (14%), a Class B (medium) for 5 out of 14 elements (36%), and a Class C (high) for 7 out of 14 elements (50%).

Structure Density – The structure density within the assessment area is at least one structure per 5-10 acres.

Proximity to Fuels – One subdivision within the assessment area and adjacent to the wildland-urban interface is less than 40 feet to flammable fuels and the other subdivision is between 40-100 feet to flammable fuels.

Building Materials – Less than 10% of the structures within the assessment area have fire resistant roofs and/or siding.

Survivable Space – 10-50% of the structures within the assessment area and adjacent to the wildland-urban interface have improved survivable space around the property.

Roads – Roads within the assessment area are narrow and/or single lane, minimally maintained, and contain no shoulders.

Response Time – Response time to the assessment area is 20 minutes or less.

Access – Access to assessment area is narrow, dead-end roads or 1 way in, 1 way out and with steep grades.

Table 11. Structural Hazard Assessment for Albion FPD

Subdivision/Parcels	Rating Elements						
	Structure Density	Proximity of Fuels	Building Materials	Survivable Space	Roads	Response Time	Access
Marsh Creek Ridge	B	C	C	B	C	A	C
Land Creek Heights	B	B	C	B	C	A	C

A=Class A low fire hazard assessment rating

B=Class B medium fire hazard assessment rating

C=Class C high fire hazard assessment rating

Table 12 summarizes the Community Assessment for Albion FPD.

Table 12. Community Assessment Summary for Albion FPD

Rating Element	Class A	Class B	Class C	Rating (A, B, or C)
Community Description	There is a clear line where residential business, and public structures meet wildland fuels. Wildland fuels do not generally continue into the developed area.	There is no clear line of demarcation; wildland fuels are continuous outside of and within the developed area.	The community generally exists where homes, ranches, and other structures are scattered but adjacent to wildland vegetation.	B
Response Time	Prompt response time to interface areas (20 min or less).	Moderate response time to interface area (20-40 minutes).	Lengthy response time to interface area (40+ minutes).	A
Firefighting Capability	Adequate structural fire department. Sufficient	Inadequate fire department. Limited personnel, and or	Fire department non-existent or untrained and/or equipped to	B

	personnel, equipment, and wildland firefighting capability and experience.	equipment but with some wildland firefighting experience and training.	fight wildland fire.	
Water Supply	Adequate supply of fire hydrants and pressure, and/or open water sources (pools, lakes, reservoirs, rivers, etc.).	Inadequate supply of fire hydrants, or limited pressure. Limited water supply.	No pressure water system available near interface. No surface water available.	Hydrants in town, C for rest of district
Local Emergency Operations Group (EOG)	Active EOG. Evacuation plan in place.	Limited participation in EOG. Have some form of evacuation process.	No EOG. No evacuation plan in place.	B
Structure Density	At least one structure per 0-5 acres.	On structure per 5-10 acres.	Less than one structure per 10 acres.	A in town, B for rest of district
Community Planning Practices	County/local laws and zoning ordinances require use of fire safe residential design and adequate ingress/egress of fire suppression resources. Fire Department actively participates in planning process.	Local officials have an understanding of appropriate community planning practices for wildfire loss mitigation. Fire department has limited input to fire safe development and planning efforts.	Community standards for fire safe development and protection are marginal or non-existent. Little or no effort has been made in assessing and applying measures to reduce wildfire impact.	B
Fire Mitigation Ordinances, Laws, or Regulations in Place	Have adopted local ordinances or codes requiring fire safe landscaping, building and planning. Fire Department actively participates in planning process.	Have voluntary ordinances or codes requiring fire safe landscaping and building practices. Fire Department practices in planning process.	No local codes, laws or ordinances requiring fire safe building landscaping or planning processes.	B
Fire Department Equipment	Good supply of structure and wildland fire apparatus and miscellaneous specialty equipment.	Smaller supply of fire apparatus in fairly good repair with some specialty equipment.	Minimum amount of fire apparatus, which is old and in need of repair. None or little specialty equipment.	B
Fire Department Training and Experience	Large, fully paid fire department with personnel that meet NFPA or NWCG training requirements, are experienced in wildland fire, and have adequate equipment.	Mixed fire department. Some paid and some volunteer personnel. Limited experience, training and equipment to fight wildland fire.	Small, all volunteer fire department. Limited training, experience and budget with regular turnover of personnel. Do not meet NFPA or NWCG standards.	C, but do meet standards

Community Fire Safe Efforts and programs already in place	Organized and active groups (Fire Dept.) providing educational materials and programs for their community.	Limited interest and participation in educational programs. Fire Department does some prevention and public education.	No interest of participation in educational programs. No prevention/education efforts by fire department.	B
Community support and attitudes	Actively supports urban interface plans and actions.	Some participation in urban interface plans and actions.	Opposes urban interface plans and efforts.	B

3.5.3 Burley/North Cassia Fire Protection District

This northernmost FPD covers a total of 198,971 acres including 10,091 acres of BLM land, 184,352 acres of private land, and 4,526 acres of State land (Table 6). Much of the private land is presently agricultural land, but housing, agricultural related industries and produce shipping points have developed along the EIRR and Highway 30. The number of approved subdivisions in this FPD has increased rapidly during the last decade both east and west of Burley, however, farm based center pivot irrigation still control major portions of land. The present expansion of subdivisions appears to be moving more rapidly east and north along the Snake River than to the west of Burley. Over time the approved subdivisions have become so linked together that it is difficult to tell where one subdivision stops and another begins.

Heavy fuel loads exist throughout this FPD (Figure 9) and are a combination of native and exotic vegetation, namely cheatgrass brome. These fuels can readily carry fire once ignition occurs. Some housing has been built adjacent to or inside these fuel beds with minimum effort at developing defensive space (Figure 10). As a result of the expanses of these fuels, large fires are probable and facilities are going to be threatened during any incident. With the movement from rectangular to circular fields as a result of center pivot irrigation, corners and stretches along roads are not being managed and could provide a pathway for fire from patches of natural fuels on windy days. To compound the fuel problem further older homes and farm buildings are being abandoned and surrounding areas are returning to heavy stands of grass and shrubs that are curing out earlier in the fire season because of lower moisture.

There is little surface water in this FPD except in the Snake River and irrigation canals, which can be used when access has been developed. The departments do have the ability to hook into irrigation equipment to refill fire fighting equipment during the irrigation months, but outside of the irrigation system water must be hauled from the fire stations or community fire hydrant systems where present.